16

A

SERMON,

Preached before the

SONS of the CLERGY,

IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. *PAUL*,

ON

Thurſday the 10th of *May*, 1764.

694. k. 1.
16

By RICHARD HIND, D. D.

Rector of SHERING, in *Eſſex*; and Chaplain to the Right Reverend the Lord Biſhop of LONDON.

To which is annexed,

A LIST of the annual Amount of the Collection for this CHARITY, from the Year 1721.

LONDON:

Printed for C. BATHURST, oppoſite St. Dunſtan's Church, Fleet-Street.

M.DCC.LXIV.

TO

The Right Hon. the Earl *of* NORTHUMBERLAND,
The Right Revd. the Lord *Biſhop of* LINCOLN,
Sir GEORGE POCOCK, *Knt. of the* Bath.
GEORGE NELSON, Eſq; Alderman.
The Revd. Dr. TAYLOR, Chancellor *of Sarum*,
The Revd. GEORGE SECKER, D. D.
JOHN BETTESWORTH, L. L. D.
The Revd. WILLIAM LLOYD, M. A.
The Revd. ANTHONY AUFRERE, M. A.
JOHN PUGH PRYSE, Eſq;
JOHN DELME, Eſq;
BENJAMIN BEEWICK, Eſq;

STEWARDS *for the late* Feaſt *of the* SONS *of the* CLERGY.

THIS

SERMON,

Preached and publiſhed at their Requeſt,

IS INSCRIBED,

By their moſt obedient Servant,

RICHARD HIND.

A LIST *of the annual Amount of this Charity, as compleat as could be procured, commencing with* 1721. *By which will be perceived, how much in general the Charity has increaſed from the Approbation and Bounty of the Public, and which, it is hoped, it will continue to do, ſo as to equal the Wants of thoſe whom it was calculated to provide for.*

		l.	*s.*	*d.*
1721	—	330	16	0
1722	—	328	16	0
1723	—	382	6	0
1724	—	566	10	0
1725	—	630	5	0
1726	—	575	4	0
1727	—	655	0	0
1728	—	579	17	9
1729	—	523	6	11
1730	—	722	6	4
1731	—	840	1	0
1732	—	951	1	3
1733	—	909	6	0
1734	—	1000	3	0
1735	—	850	5	3
1736	—	837	7	0
1737	—	856	9	7
1738	—	935	2	7
1739	—	912	11	3
1740	—	784	1	6
1741	—	834	2	0
1742	—	866	6	2
1743	—	819	0	0
1744	—	848	16	9
1745	—	1044	0	0
1746	—	922	10	6
1747	—	1062	2	0
1748	—	916	6	6
1749	—	985	12	6
1750	—	1134	14	0
1751	—	1167	19	0
1752	—	1101	18	6
1753	—	1063	2	6
1754	—	976	8	2
1755	—	1096	3	6
1756	—	973	18	3
1757	—	912	7	6
1758	—	1081	18	7
1759	—	1163	9	9
1760	—	1122	8	9
1761	—	1096	15	0
1762	—	836	13	9
1763	—	1224	14	0
1764	—	1008	1	9

N. B. The *whole* Money, collected on this Occaſion, is diſpoſed of by the Stewards within the Year, in placing out the Children of poor Clergymen Apprentices: Whereby *Sixty-four* were provided for in the Courſe of the laſt Year.

ROMANS xiv. 16.

Let not then your Good be evil ſpoken of.

AMONG the many excellent Things that may be ſpoken of our Holy Religion, rendering it worthy of all Acceptation, One, and that no inconſiderable Circumſtance in it's Favour is This ; that the inſpired Teachers of it, by inculcating ſuch general Rules of Conduct, as are founded in the moſt perfect Reaſon, and beſt adapted to our real Situation in Life, have at the ſame Time furniſh'd a diſtinct Argument for that Situation's being the Appointment of God. The good Effects ariſing from hence are more extenſive and important, than wou'd perhaps be, at firſt Sight, imagin'd. For it is not in Matters of Faith only, that Men of Peculiarity or Refinement, affect to be wiſe above what is written ; thereby affording us a melancholy Proof of the Vanity of Men's Hearts, as well as of the Imperfection of their Faculties ; and how happy it is for us, that even in Points comparatively plain and obvious, (ſuch as wou'd never have been doubted of by any Man of plain common Senſe, had they not been controverted by ſome who think it enough to be ingeniouſly in the Wrong,) we are *taught with Authority*. What can be plainer for Inſtance, than that Man was form'd for Society ? The Wants and Weakneſſes of his Nature, every

Affection and Sentiment of his Heart irreſiſtibly lead him to it; he feels, and experiences himſelf to be actually plac'd in it. And yet a ſplenetick and fanciful Writer, and one that ſtands high in the Republick of Letters, hath been at great Pains to bring Men back to a falſely ſuppos'd State of Nature; by decrying Artificial Society, with as much Zeal as ſome Men do, what they are pleas'd to call, Artificial Religion. To enter into a formal Diſcuſſion of this Queſtion, Whether the World ſhou'd turn Savages, is neither neceſſary, nor pertinent. My Meaning was, to produce one glaring Inſtance, among many, of the Weakneſs and Wantonneſs of the Human Mind; and thereby to illuſtrate the ſingular Advantage ariſing from the Goſpel, as a fix'd and ſtanding Memorial to Mankind not only of the Duties they are to perform in Reference to a future Life, but of the Part they are to act, even in Relation to this; as an infallible Teſt and Criterion, by which to try the Doctrines of Men, in Matters of natural Reaſon, as well as of pure Revelation; ſince otherwiſe, a great Part of the World wou'd be inſecure in the Poſſeſſion of many of the plaineſt and moſt indiſputable Principles; and wou'd be more, than may be generally imagin'd, in the State of *Children, toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, by the Sleight of Men, and cunning Craftineſs, whereby they lie in Wait to deceive*, Eph. iv. 14.

Having Recourſe then to the Scriptures, we there find Mankind conſider'd as in a State of Society. The natural Suggeſtions of Reaſon, that the Situation we find ourſelves in, (whatſoever Mixture there may be in it of Good and Evil, or how much ſoever the latter may preponderate,) is the Appointment of God, and conſtitutes a Part of our Trial, are there confirm'd by an infallible Authority. Be

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the accidental Concomitants of ſuch a State ever ſo untoward, this hinders not, but that it is the beſt upon the Whole: The Apoſtolical Rule is univerſal, that we are not to go out of the World, becauſe we ſee many Things to diſlike in it; but taking Things as we find them, are to act our Part upon the Stage of it, as uſefully as we can to others, as innocently and ſafely as we can to ourſelves.

But Calumny and Reproach, indiſcriminately beſtow'd on the worſt and the moſt virtuous Deeds, and all the numerous Train of bad Conſequences, which (whether peculiar to it, or not,) from the Degeneracy of Mankind have Place in Society, it muſt be own'd, are really Evils. And the Goſpel, which is throughout the moſt friendly to ſocial Happineſs, of any Syſtem that was ever offer'd to the World, hath done all, that cou'd be done, to prevent them. For here too, the Word of Truth ſpeaketh not as Man ſpeaketh. It doth not enforce one Obligation at the Expence of another, but ſtands as a Corrective to the miſtaken Judgements of ſome well-meaning Men, whoſe Extravagancies upon the Subject of Indifference under unmerited Reproach might lead one to conclude there was nothing criminal in the Reproacher. Chriſtianity ever conſiders the being evil-ſpoken of, as a real Grievance; and Evil-ſpeaking, as a real Crime. The ſevereſt Threatenings are denounc'd; and the utmoſt Care and Attention inculcated; as much as is poſſible, to prevent or to ſilence the Calumny of Evil Tongues. We are call'd upon to walk circumſpectly; to be not only *as harmleſs as Doves*, but *as wiſe as Serpents*; making it our Aim to *cut off all Occaſion* of Cenſure *from them which deſire Occaſion*; and, to this End, taking Care at all Times, not only that our Actions be materially good, and well

meant, but that they be under the Direction of our Judgement ; free from all ſuch Defects and Improprieties in the Circumſtances and Manner of doing them, as might expoſe them to Miſconſtruction, and Us to unkind and cenſorious Reflection.

The Event of this Attention on our Part, indeed, will not be certain, Our Good may, after all, be evil ſpoken of, do what we can. But ſtill, there is a Sort of Conduct, better calculated, than another, to ſecure a proper Reception to our good Actions ; one that bids faireſt for procuring the general Approbation ; that will be moſt effectual in ſhutting the Mouths and tying up the Tongues of the Malevolent, and obviating all unfavourable Interpretation from the miſtaken Obſerver.

The Precept muſt therefore be underſtood, as expreſſive only of a probable, not a certain Event—under the ſame Limitations with that other Apoſtolical Injunction, —*Let no Man deſpiſe thee.* Contempt from ſome can by no Means whatever be prevented. But there is a Manner of Deportment more particularly ſuited to conciliate, and even to command, a general Reſpect ; and of which the Eſteem and Reverence of the World will be the moſt probable and natural Conſequence. That, without Doubt, it was, which the Apoſtle there meant to recommend to the Cretan Biſhop : And (inaſmuch as out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh, and the good Opinion and good Word of Mankind are to each other as the Cauſe and Effect,) the ſame may he be underſtood to recommend to the Roman Converts, and to Us, in the Injunction of the Text—*Let not then your Good be evil ſpoken of.*

We

We are apt uſually to ſay that, bad as the World is, there are few or none ſo abandon'd, as to exerciſe a declar'd Hoſtility, or openly to level their Reproaches againſt Good in the Abſtract; adopting the Sentiment of the Philoſopher, that there is ſomething ſo lovely and amiable, ſo much of Dignity in Virtue, that ſeen in her native Garb ſhe muſt awe every Beholder into ſome Sort of Reveverence and Reſpect. How far this may be true, I ſhall not take upon me to determine. For the Sake of Human Nature one wou'd fain hope it was true; as that is only to hope, that there are no Monſters in Nature; or, that no human Being can be ſo far loſt and deprav'd, as to become abſolutely evil. But let that be as it will—Virtuous Men and Virtuous Actions will, on ſome Occaſions, fare but little the better for it. The moſt conceal'd, and at the ſame Time moſt ſignificant Ingredient in every moral Act is the internal Principle and Intention; the Purity of which may ever be doubted by bad Men, and ever arraign'd by cenſorious ones; who, whether they judge according to the Appearance or not, *may* judge unrighteous Judgement, and not as God judgeth, who alone ſeeth the Heart. Add to this, that the moſt ſimple of Human Actions are, to a Degree, complex; many of them the Reſult of a Combination of various, and ſometimes oppoſite Circumſtances; and the beſt of them very imperfect: And hence ariſes an unhappy Opportunity to Malevolence of ſhedding it's baneful Influence, even without being at the Pains of Invention. The Aggravation of ſome one wrong, or ambiguous Circumſtance, with or even without the Miſcolouring or Miſrepreſentation of others, in the Hands of the firſt Reporter will ſerve the Purpoſe effectually: To theſe

Additions

Additions are ſure to be made, in every Stage of it's Progreſs thro' different Hands; ſo that by this gradual Diſtortion of one Feature after another, the Faireſt Form ſhall ſoon be wrought up into a Monſter of Deformity. For in this Robbery committed upon our good Name, as well as in the Invaſion of any other Part of our Property, the Original Theft is encourag'd by the certain Multitude of thoſe, that are ready to be the Receivers. Some, from a Precipitancy of Temper, are determin'd by firſt Impreſſions. They judge at firſt Sight, without Evidence; they are credulous, and believe every Tale. Others again, will be finding Fault, at a Venture, from a mere Diſpoſition to be talking, or to fill up Vacancy of Thought, without any formal Intention of doing either Good or Harm: Or, from mere Wantonneſs perhaps, or an habitual Turn to a diſſipated Kind of Ridicule, they ſeize upon a reſpectable Character as the fitteſt Object of their Jeſt, and ſay—*Am I not in Sport?* Many too there are, who take the unkind Side, and ſpeak of their Betters in Terms of Diſadvantage, from a general Narrowneſs of Nature, in Hopes of bringing down ſuperior Merit from that Station of Eminence and Reputation, which gives Uneaſineſs to the Beholder. Or perhaps, they attack eſtabliſh'd Characters, as they do any other eſtabliſh'd Opinion, in Compliment to their Underſtanding. And then, are there not ſuch Characters in Life, as Snarlers by Conſtitution, who ever think and talk on the illnatur'd Side; or who, labouring under bodily Infirmity, diſcharge their peccant Humours in peeviſh Reflections upon others; or who are chagrin'd and diſappointed, and thinking the World has dealt unkindly by them, are determin'd to make a Return in Kind, by treating the World with Severity? Add to this, the many interfering Intereſts

that

that muſt ariſe in Life, to ſet Men's Paſſions, and their Tongues at Work; the Attachments to a Party; the Intereſt that bad Men have in depreciating ſuperior Excellence; and (which is *a ſore Evil under the Sun*) the too frequent Opportunities afforded them of doing it with Succeſs, by the Detections of falſe Pretenſions to Goodneſs: In which Caſe it will be in Morals as in Life, that every Bankruptcy affects the general Credit, tending to make Men ſuſpicious of every one elſe, and from ſuſpecting, by an eaſy Tranſition, to paſs on to Aſſurance upon the moſt trivial Occaſion; and to blaſt a Reputation by ſhrewd Hints, that all Things are not as they ſhou'd be.

In a Word, if we conſider the Folly and Wickedneſs of ſome; the Pride and Conceit, or the Envy and Jealouſy of others, diſpoſing them to be ſevere and cenſorious in order to diſplay their ſuperior Subtlety and Acuteneſs in judging, or perhaps to blame every laudable and worthy Deſign in which they have not the Lead; we can never be at a Loſs in accounting for the Number, or the Acrimony of buſy Tongues in reflecting upon good Men or good Things,

This evil Propenſity, it muſt be ſuppos'd, will not be reſtrain'd to Individuals: It will operate with equal Zeal againſt Good of a more enlarg'd and comprehenſive Plan, projected and carried on under the Direction of Numbers. If there be a good Thing upon Earth, it is Charity to the Poor. It is that, which our benevolent Religion layeth the greateſt Streſs upon, and repreſents as one main Article of Enquiry at the Great Day. Every Circumſtance, by which Charity may be rendered more beneficial, will therefore be an additional Ground of Praiſe, and entitle it to double Honour. And this, I think, is undoubtedly the

Caſe,

Caſe, in Regard to ſuch publick Inſtitutions, as that which giveth Occaſion to the annual Return of this Day's Solemnity. Let me not be miſtaken: I mean not to recommend publick, to the Diſparagement of private Charity. Let them (where there is Ability) go Hand in Hand. Liberality in both is, to a Degree, in the Power of more than will allow it perhaps, themſelves being Judges. Encouragements to publick Charities may be private; or if publick in the Act, may, in the Intention, and in the Eye of God who ſeeth the Intention, be as private, as when the *left Hand knoweth not what the Right Hand giveth.* But in Regard to the Effects of our Charity, it ſeems clear that theſe will be in many Reſpects more conſiderable, when we convey it through the Channel of a publick Repoſitory. Beſides that annual Collections thus made in Support of ſuch Charities, ſerve as Remembrancers to ſome; and afford them an Opportunity of throwing in their Mite, where they are ſure it will be accepted with Thankfulneſs, and employed with Integrity; beſides that the greateſt Good may be done at the ſmalleſt Expence to each individual Contributor; and ſuch Good too, as never cou'd have been done by the ſame Number of independent Contributors not acting to one common End; I have ever thought it a Circumſtance of Importance, that many Inſtances too of Diſtreſs are, in Conſequence, known and reliev'd, that might otherwiſe have been unnotic'd. For Poverty is weak and depreſs'd, and ſhy of complaining of her hard Caſe; and many Times chooſeth rather to languiſh in ſecret, than to become a voluntary Suitor for *private* Benevolence. This modeſt and ingenuous Pride, of being *aſham'd to beg*, is not the leaſt frequent, nor the leaſt excu-

excuſable ſurely, in thoſe Inſtances, where the Diſtreſs is moſt cutting, as having ſucceeded to a State of comfortable Sufficiency. But where a Fund is rais'd by the united Benevolence of numerous Contributors; in every qualified Object there commenceth a Right to a proportional Share of it, which may embolden the Sons and Daughters of Affliction to make known their Diſtreſs, and receive a ſeaſonable Relief, without *crouching for a Piece of Silver, or a Morſel of Bread.* And ſurely, ſuch Objects deſerve our moſt compaſſionate Regard; and by their Silence plead moſt perſuaſively, not only for our Charity, but for ſome Sort of Tenderneſs and Delicacy, even in the Manner of adminiſtring it. *The Inſtruments of the Churl are evil,* coarſe and indelicate, when he aſſiſts, as well as *when he deſtroyeth the Poor*; but *the* truely *liberal,* at the ſame Time that he *deviſeth liberal Things,* contrives to obſerve a Decorum in the Circumſtances and Manner of their Execution; conſidering it as one Branch of the Apoſtolical Precept of giving with Simplicity, and of ſhewing Mercy with Chearfulneſs; and remembring that, as it is ever more bleſſed, ſo it is on moſt Occaſions more agreeable to give than to receive.

Every Deſign of this Nature, one wou'd think, ſhou'd bid fair for having the general Voice. Or, tho' all cou'd not heartily commend, Candor at leaſt ſhou'd have been backward to find Fault, and have overlook'd any real or ſuppos'd Imperfections, out of Regard to the general Excellence and Utility of the Deſign. And yet, much Diſſatisfaction hath been expreſs'd, and much Zeal and Acrimony, at different Times, employ'd in diſcrediting all publick Inſti-

tutions of this Sort. Some have not been wanting to dispute the Reality and Exiſtence of that nobleſt Principle of the Human Heart which prompts it to relieve Miſery, and communicate Happineſs, by reſolving every the moſt humane and compaſſionate Action into a mercenary Reſpect unto Ourſelves. Others again affect to talk, as if Ignorance and Barbarity in the lower Claſſes of Life were the beſt Policy; and as if the greater Part of the Species were to be conſider'd and treated as mere Beaſts of Burden, as *Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water*, and had no Concern with Religion or Morals. Or, tho' they diſlike not, or chooſe not perhaps to avow their Diſlike of Charitable Inſtitutions; Abuſes, whether real or really believ'd or not, are charg'd upon the Management and Execution. And with Regard to that particular one, which now calls us together, unkind and injurious Things are thrown out, and Prejudices propagated againſt it, from a Topick in every View the moſt invidious and unwarrantable ſurely, the very Lineage and Stock of thoſe who are the Objects of it.

Amidſt all this Clamour and Evil-ſpeaking, what is to be done? Is Virtue to be entirely paſſive?—Secure in it's own Sufficiency, and regardleſs of the Reception it may meet with in the World? That, 'tis plain, will never do. Neither Duty nor Prudence, neither Regard to the Intereſts of Virtue, nor to a Man's own Comfort and Tranquillity will admit of it. Indeed, were Man the ſolitary, independent Being that ſome wou'd make him, ſtanding alone, and unconnected with any others of his Species; his Plan of Conduct and Duty, tho' perhaps equally ha-

zardous, wou'd in one Reſpect be more ſimple and contracted, as he wou'd have nothing to do, but to pleaſe God: But thrown, as he is, into this troubleſome and tumultuous Scene, the Part he has to act, becomes more intricate and embarraſs'd, as, in Subſerviency to his Duty to God, he muſt endeavour to pleaſe Men; by abſtaining not only from Evil, but the Appearance of it; making it his firſt and principal Aim to be Good, and to do Good; and when that Point is ſecur'd, to be Good, and to do it, as far as is poſſible, in a right and acceptable Manner: The good Opinion and Praiſe of Men being, in it's proper Place and Degree, an allowable, an indiſpenſable Object of Purſuit; what we are prompted to, by ſome of the moſt honourable Principles and Affections of our Nature; what is neceſſary to the Attainment of many very important Ends; the Voice of the World, when correſponding with the Teſtimony of our own Hearts, being an additional Aſſurance, and a moſt pleaſing one too, that our Conduct hath been right; enlarging too the Sphere of our virtuous Activity, and by the Influence of our Authority and Example promoting the Good of Mankind and the Glory of God in the World. Reputation therefore, tho' more difficult to maintain than a good Conſcience; tho' a choice and tender Plant, liable at every Turn to be nipp'd, and even blaſted by the rude Breath of Calumny, muſt however be cheriſh'd and nouriſh'd up with the niceſt Care and Attention, that it may grow up, and flouriſh, and bring forth Fruit unto Perfection.

The ſeveral prudential Rules, fit and neceſſary to be obſerv'd by every private Chriſtian in common Life for the Attainment of this deſireable End (ſo far I mean, as it is attainable in ſuch a World as this) I have not Time to enumerate.

And in Regard to Inſtitutions of publick Utility, ſuch as we ſee, to the Honour of this great and opulent City, abounding more and more in it every Day, a particular Vindication of *them* from every injurious Aſperſion, is neither within my Province, nor (ſequeſter'd as I am from the World) within my Ability. Sure I am, that they are all of them form'd upon Plans of the greateſt Humanity and Tenderneſs to the diſtreſs'd Part of our Species; and ſo long as every prudential Caution, that human Wiſdom and Foreſight could deviſe, is applied againſt Abuſe and Miſmanagement of every Kind, the Conductors and Encouragers, as well as the firſt Projectors of them, will deſerve to be had in moſt grateful Remembrance.

My preſent Concern is, to confine myſelf to the particular Charity eſtabliſh'd by Royal Charter for the Relief of poor Widows and Children of Clergymen; and, in Purſuance of my Subject, to remove Prejudices in Order to ſecure your Encouragement.

Now ſome, I know, *ſpeak Evil of this Way*, from their Diſlike to the Sacred Character in general: Fain wou'd I be charitable, and ſure, it is no Breach of Charity to ſay that ſome, I fear, diſlike the Teachers of Religion, becauſe they love not Religion. Where this is the Caſe, we muſt, with Grief of Heart, take this melancholy Comfort to ourſelves, that ſuch Enmity is our greateſt Honour. If *the Love of many wax cold* towards us and even towards our hapleſs Poſterity, becauſe *Iniquity aboundeth*; this mighty Conſolation, we humbly hope, will be at Hand to ſupport them, that they are of the Number of the *Bleſſed, who ſuffer for Righteouſneſs Sake.*

But a more general Ground of Prejudice againſt the Clerical Order (it will be ſaid) is the Unworthineſs of ſome Clergymen. Be it ſo, and be the Occaſion given to this Prejudice ever ſo real, (tho' ſurely it will be no unſeemly Magnifying of mine Office, nor any undue Partiality to thoſe that miniſter in it, to ſay, that the Body of the Engliſh Clergy are in general ſuch in Point of Learning and Morals, as, humanly ſpeaking, becometh their honourable Station:) yet to extend the Miſconduct of ſome few Individuals to a Charge againſt the Profeſſion, and even to puniſh the real or ſuppos'd Unworthineſs of *ſome* Fathers in the innocent and unoffending Poſterity of *All*, hath ſomething in it ſo peculiarly inhuman and abſurd, that one knows not how to give a ſerious Anſwer to an Objection, which ſome are not aſham'd to avow. The beſt Uſe, we can make, of this uncandid Treatment, My Brethren, is nevertheleſs not to be *weary in well-doing*; but to do our Part towards rendering all ſuch Arguments againſt Charity to the Fatherleſs, as univerſally falſe in their Foundation, as they are worſe than falſe in their Inference; by taking Heed to our Conduct, and giving no real Occaſion to *our Good being evil ſpoken of*; not only for Religion's Sake, not for our own Sake only, but for the Sake of our Poſterity: Since, from perſonal Failings, our very Blood, it ſeems, will be attainted, and an Incapacity for common Favour be deriv'd upon our Deſcendants, which no Circumſtances of perſonal Merit or Diſtreſs will ever take off.

But the Queſtion will be put, perhaps—Why do not the Clergy bear their own Burdens? Why not ſupport the indigent Families of their deceas'd Brethren, without laying the Laity under Contribution for their Relief?

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Were the Clergy as independent of the Laity, as in the Times of Popery ; or were this a Queſtion of theirs upon a ſimilar Occaſion, retorted upon them ; there wou'd be ſomething more reaſonable in this Way of Talking. But connected, as they now are, with the Laity by every Civil and Social Tie, under the preſent happy Alliance eſtabliſh'd by the Reformation between Church and State ; this ſurely is but an invidious Opportunity taken to put aſunder thoſe, whom God and the Laws of this Country have made One. And then, is the Liberality of the Clergy withheld from thoſe that are not of their Tribe? So far from it, that over and above the legal Burdens laid upon them in common with the reſt of the Community, and which they ſubmit to with all Duty and Chearfulneſs ; the Expence of Charity (if we may call it by that Name) wou'd, I am perſuaded, in numberleſs Inſtances, equal, if not exceed, the Proportion required of them by the Laws of their Country. The prevailing Taſt of the preſent Age, you all know, is for Perſons of Fortune to flock, more than ever, to this great Center of Buſineſs and Pleaſure. Their Country Manſions, once the conſtant Seats of Hoſpitality and Charity, for great Part of the Year are deſerted. The Poor, from various Cauſes, are every where numerous ; and not the leſs ſo ſurely, for having this Source of Relief and Aſſiſtance taken from them. Their main, if not their only, Reſource is in their Parochial Miniſter. Him *the Poor have always with them* ; to Him they reſort for Food, for Money under caſual Difficulties, for Medicine to heal their Sickneſs. Humanity will not ſuffer him to turn away from a real poor Man ; Knowledge too of Men's Expectations from him, which are frequently *very* unreaſonable,

ſonable, and a Deſire to maintain the good Opinion and Eſteem of his People, are Conſiderations, which *all* Hearts are not of a Contexture hard enough to reſiſt. If in ſome Inſtances, he hath gone beyond his Ability, and to the Prejudice of his Family, forgive him this Wrong. At leaſt, let him be acquitted of any ſuch narrow and contracted Scheme of Benevolence as muſt be imply'd, to give any Shadow of Reaſon to this excluſive Plan of Relief to his indigent Offspring. The Propoſers of it muſt either be very unfair, or very ignorant of the real Situation of a Parochial Paſtor. His Practice, I truſt, will ever be ſuch as our Common Chriſtianity requires of us all—*as he has Opportunity, to do Good unto all Men.* But if it were fit that Works of Charity ſhou'd be determin'd by Spiritual or Civil Diſtinctions, and be the Subject of Agreement or Compromiſe, that each ſhou'd provide for his own; the Advantage, in a worldly View, wou'd, I conceive, be much, very much on the Side of the Clergyman.

Under this State of Things (and for the Truth of this Repreſentation I may ſafely appeal to the Teſtimony of many here preſent) can any Thing be more unreaſonable than this Call upon the Clergy to anſwer all the diſtreſs'd Caſes that muſt ariſe in the Eccleſiaſtical Part of this Country: In which, the Revenues of the Church, upon that Plan of *Equality* which ſome may think wou'd be an effectual Remedy to the Evil, wou'd be found to be but ill-proportion'd to the Number of Parochial Cures; in which, thoſe, who under the preſent *unequal* Diſtribution *are* competently provided for, are comparatively few; whilſt Multitudes labour in the Vineyard, and gather

little

little or none of the Fruits of it, defrauded perhaps of Part of that little, and miniſtring in holy Things for a ſcantier Pittance than many, now a days, beſtow upon their menial Servants. And yet to their Power, yea, and many of them (I bear them Record) even beyond their Power, are willing of themſelves to miniſter to the Neceſſities of their Brethren. With all due Reſpect and Gratitude to the many excellent Perſons among the Laity, who are *Fellow-workers with us in this Labour of Love*; Give me Leave to ſay, that the preſent Flouriſhing State of this Corporation, and ſome other Local ones eſtabliſh'd in particular Counties, is owing, in the Degree it ought to be owing, to the generous Contributions of our own Body. We mean not therefore, (let our Works ſpeak for us, that we mean not) that *we ourſelves ſhou'd be eas'd, and other Men burden'd*; but that *what* thro' Neceſſity *is wanting on our Part, may be ſupplied by your Liberality.*

This, the numerous Objects of this Day's Charity, unhappily furniſh'd with every Claim to your Compaſſion, unable to plead their own Cauſe, beg Leave thro' me to ſollicit at your Hands. In one View, they have a peculiar Title to your Regard, as being the Relicts and Orphans of Perſons by their Education unqualified, by the Laws of their Profeſſion reſtrain'd from the Purſuit of any Secular Employment in Aid of a Proviſion, ſcanty and inconſiderable in itſelf, and render'd more ſo by the decreas'd Value of Money, and the daily increaſing Value of all the neceſſary Articles of Life. As theſe are Effects, immediately connected with the Commercial State of a Country; Where can I apply myſelf with more Propriety,

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than to the Mercantile Part of this Audience, that, as *Our Want may have been*, to a Degree, the Conſequence of *their Abundance*, *their Abundance alſo may be a Supply to Our Want?*

But I am confident, Beloved; your Attendance in this Holy Place juſtifies me in being confident, that you *were ready long ago, to deliver the Poor that cry, the Fatherleſs, and him that hath none to help him.* Otherwiſe, I wou'd addreſs you as Men, as Chriſtians, as Proteſtants. As Men, I wou'd beſpeak your Attention, (for the Conſequence of that muſt be your Compaſſion and Charity) to a Caſe of ſingular Diſtreſs, heighten'd by every aggravating Circumſtance of ſickening Age, and helpleſs Infancy, of Poverty after comparative Affluence. As Chriſtians, I wou'd exhort you to aſſiſt the mournful Relicts and Orphans of thoſe, that *watch'd over your Souls*; Perſons, many of them, doubtleſs of unblemiſh'd Worth, who faithfully diſcharg'd their Duty, and deſerv'd *to be highly eſteem'd in Love for their Work's Sake.* As Proteſtants, I wou'd call upon you *to viſit in their Affliction the Fatherleſs and Widows* of thoſe, to whoſe Zeal and Abilities it hath, on many Occaſions, been greatly owing that you are now in Poſſeſſion *of a Religion pure and undefil'd before God.* I wou'd preſs it upon you, to do your Part towards wiping out this Blot of the Reformation, and ſilencing the Reproaches of that enſlaving Church, equally hoſtile to the Natural and Civil Rights of Mankind, which triumpheth in the Poverty of a married Clergy. But theſe are Topicks, which have been often urg'd to you, on this Occaſion, to much better Advantage; I ſhall therefore no lon-

ger treſpaſs upon your Patience, than by an Addreſs to the Female Part of this Audience.

You then, whoſe Hearts are moſt ſuſceptible of every tender Sentiment and Affection, will recollect that the greater Part of the humble Supplicants of this Day are altogether ſuch as you are, excepting their Poverty—in that Circumſtance, may you never be like them! The greater Part of them, I ſay, are connected with you, ſome by Similitude of domeſtic Relation; all by Similitude of Sex. They are Widows, and Virgins; *Widows indeed*; fatherleſs, and hitherto innocent young Virgins.—Defenceleſs and expos'd Conditions both, in every Station; but more, much more expos'd, to the Temptations of an inſidious World, by that Poverty, which they intreat *You* to relieve. I need only to mention this, and truſt their Cauſe in your Hands. Your own nice Senſe of the Honour and Dignity of your Sex, your own feelings for a miſerable Parent, all whoſe other Griefs are abſorb'd in painful Solicitude for thoſe whom ſhe hath hitherto train'd up in the Paths of Virtue, will, I truſt, be their moſt powerful Advocates. 'Tis yours, to raiſe them above the Temptations of Want. On your Bounty ſhe in Part depends for having that Evil Hour for ever remov'd from her, when in the Bitterneſs of her Soul ſhe might otherwiſe curſe the Day in which ſhe became a Mother; when *the Daughter* of Zion, *waſted with Miſery* wou'd adopt the Language of the Pſalmiſt, and ſay, *Bleſſed had he been, that had taken my Children, and daſhed them againſt the Stones.*

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As for you, whom the Bloom of Life, and the flattering Careſſes of an inſinuating World may ſeem to have ſet at a Diſtance (in the preſumptuous Eye of youthful Vanity, unmeaſurable) from theſe Scenes of Woe; if the Noiſe and hurry of Pleaſure and Diſſipation *hath* deafen'd your Ears againſt the Cries of Miſery; Attend me for one ſerious Moment, *to the Houſe of Mourning*, and there ſurvey a Scene of Diſtreſs, and Sadneſs of Countenance, that *may make* a young and thoughtleſs *Heart better*. See there a ſtriking Picture of the Inſtability of human Enjoyments, in yon venerable Matron, once perhaps fluſh'd with Hopes like yours, now ſunk in ſilent Sorrow, *becauſe the Comforter that ſhou'd relieve her Soul is removed far from her, and her Children are deſolate:* Whilſt *They*, unconſcious of their irreparable Loſs, *ſay*, or with aſking Eyes ſeem to ſay to their Mother, *Where is Corn and Wine? For theſe Things her Eyes run down with Water; She poureth out her Heart like Water before the Face of the Lord; ſhe lifteth her Hands towards him for the Life of her young Children that faint for hunger, and aſk for Bread, and no Man breaketh it unto them.* Once more let me take up the Words of the plaintive Prophet, and ſay—*Behold and ſee, all ye that paſs by, if there be any Sorrow like unto her Sorrow*; reduc'd by one afflicting Stroke of Providence, from Reſpect to Contempt, from decent Affluence to pinching Penury, from a Diſpenſer to an Object of Charity; *her Inheritance turn'd to Strangers, and her Houſe to Aliens.* O! let the lenient Hand of Charity raiſe her from her forlorn and miſerable State. Belie not the Tenderneſs of your Form, your Age, your

Sex; but be You the fair Miniſters of Providence in applying thoſe natural Reliefs and Abatements of Miſery, which God in his Wiſdom and Goodneſs hath ſtor'd up in the Hands and Hearts of the Rich and Compaſſionate. By being thus *merciful to the Poor, you will do good unto your own Souls.* Whatever you ſhall thus *lend unto the Lord*, will be repaid to you with Intereſt. When all the gaudy Scenes of this World are vaniſhing (as they muſt one Day vaniſh) from your Sight, and your only rational Wiſh perhaps will be, that They may be as if they had never been; then every tender and benevolent Action will return into your Boſoms; and, far from being painful or indifferent in the Reflection, will adminiſter ſuch pure and perfect Joy and Delight to you, as no other Pleaſure's of this Life can give, no Pains or Misfortunes of it can take away.

FINIS.